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AUTHOR Renchler, Ron
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ABSTRACT

Developing and pursuing a "vision" for school success is a crucial part of effective educational leadership. This document explores theoretical models of vision for school success and leadership forces in education; discusses principals as visionary leaders; offers practical advice on developing, implementing, and maintaining a vision for one's school; and discusses the leader's role in shaping a positive school culture. Also explored are definitions of the successful school and the relationship between the principal's personal values, vision, and school culture. Following a brief explanation of the Onward to Excellence Program and Oregon's House Bill 2020 grant program, profiles of several Oregon schools are presented, including North Eugene High School, Pleasant View Middle School, Orchard Hill Elementary School, Oaklea Middle School, and Pilot Butte Junior High School. The profiles emphasize programs and strategies that define or promote the schools' visions for success. Programs in school climate, cooperative environment, staff empowerment, result measurement, restructuring, cooperative learning, grade reporting, home-room programs, at-risk students, talented and gifted students, writing, math, and study skills are among the items described. A section on recommendations and conclusions regarding developing and following a vision for success follows. (26 references) (CLA)

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LEADERSHIP WITH A VISION

How Principals Develop and Implement Their Visions for School Success

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Ron Renchler

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OREGON SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

1787 Agate Street
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403
(503) 346-5043
Fax: (503) 346-5890

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Preface

With a new century approaching, it is an appropriate time to think about the future of our schools and the future of students whose successes or failures in the coming century will, to a great extent, be shaped by the education they receive during the 1990s. As professional educators, principals and other school leaders bear much of the responsibility for determining the direction education will take in the next few decades.

While the challenge of effectively managing the day-to-day operations of a school is always of immediate concern to principals, they should not overlook an equally important challenge: *vision-building*, or developing and implementing a plan for the long-term success of their individual schools, which, by extension, will improve the educational system as a whole in the future. Because the seeds that yield the harvest of successful schools in the next century must be planted today, we need to give much careful thought to finding ways to shape clear, meaningful visions for school success. This OSSC Bulletin offers an overview of current theory and practice related to concepts involved in developing such visions.

Although building a vision for school success requires a great deal of time and energy, achieving that vision can be one of the most rewarding and satisfying accomplishments of a principal's career. The literature on vision described in this Bulletin, and the school profiles included herein, offer many models, ideas, approaches, and techniques that can make the process of vision-building easier.

Ron Renchler, a writer and editor specializing in educational publications, was commissioned to write this Bulletin by OSSC. He earned his doctoral degree in 1987 from the University of Oregon. Since then, he has written and edited a variety of printed material for several different educational publishers.

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Introduction

How do principals and school staff work to develop a vision for school success? The question is impossible to answer comprehensively. Nonetheless, there are certain traits and characteristics common to schools and their administrative and teaching staffs that are telltale signs of a strong and vital vision for success. The purpose of this OSSC Bulletin is to define, in a descriptive way, some of those traits and characteristics.

Because every school and its principal, staff, and students create a unique context in which a vision for success can be developed and implemented, it is futile to try to give a prescriptive list of the ways and means by which educational leaders can develop and carry out their visions. The means by which a principal develops a vision for success in one school may differ completely from the activities used by another principal in another school. Building a vision for success is a contextual activity. As Arthur Blumberg and William Greenfield (1986) note, "To lead a school well, one must have a vision of what is desirable and possible in that school's context."

As the literature on the topic demonstrates, the very concept of a "vision" for school success is a complex one, involving such components as educational philosophies, values, missions, goals, school cultures, staff development programs, curricula, organizational structures, school finance, and the myriad other pieces that go into the delivery of education in the public schools. This Bulletin concentrates on the first five items in the list; as the school profiles that follow amply illustrate, though, the lines between the various components immediately blur when school leaders start telling their stories of the ways they seek to achieve success.

Vision is interpreted very broadly here; as noted above, it primarily involves, and is reflected by, the philosophies, values, missions, and goals under which the principal and staff operate. The day-to-day routine of educating students is the primary activity of almost everyone involved in teaching; therefore, educators tend to express their visions in terms of the specific programs they think best reflect their philosophy for making their

schools successful. Of course, much time and effort also go into the formulation and expression of their visions; the principals and staff members interviewed for this publication were quite eloquent in communicating with precision and passion the hopes and dreams they seek to realize for their students. It is a testament to their energy and commitment that they were not content to let their dreams lie idle, but instead worked actively—in concrete ways—to bring their visions to fruition.

Although most of the attention in discussions of visionary school leadership focuses on the principal, educational leaders often come from the ranks of superintendents, teachers, parents, and other school administrators. As the literature on the subject and the school profiles given below demonstrate, *all* stakeholders in the educational community can and should be involved in bringing about a vision for school success. In most cases, principals engender and communicate the vision while the teachers actively involve themselves in programs to make that vision a reality—and thus a community of educators working toward successful schools is formed.

I wish to thank Stuart Smith and the OSSC staff; Milt Baum and Carol Black of the Oregon Department of Education; and David Conley of the University of Oregon's Division of Educational Policy and Management for supplying valuable information and assistance. The principals and staff members interviewed for this Bulletin were generous with their time and eloquent in communicating their visions for more successful schools. To them I owe a special note of thanks.

Chapter 1

Vision and Leadership

Effective leaders in both the public and private sectors generally tend to use their visionary qualities to drive their organizations toward success. The 1980s seemed to be a decade during which we developed a need to rediscover the idea of vision and visionary leadership. Perhaps the absence of visionary leaders in the political world throughout most of that decade made us look for it instead in the realms of business and education. The enthusiastic critical and public reception given to two books that focused on the importance of vision in leadership, Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman's (1982) *In Search of Excellence* and Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus's (1985) *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, may have been symptomatic of our desire to reconnect with a sense of vision in our lives. Whatever its source, educators have recently been reawakened to the importance of vision as an essential characteristic of an effective school leader.

"The first basic ingredient of leadership is a guiding vision," writes Warren Bennis (1989). "The leader has a clear idea of what he wants to do—professionally and personally—and the strength to persist in the face of setbacks, even failures." Bennis and Nanus (1985) define *vision* as "the creating of focus" and describe leaders as "the most results-oriented individuals in the world, and results get attention. Their visions or intentions are compelling and pull people toward them. Intensity coupled with commitment is magnetic. . . . Vision grabs."

Some Theoretical Models of Vision

Recent studies of educational leadership have identified the quality of vision as a vital attribute of effective school leaders. Roland Barth (1989), for example, sees a great need for more visionary leadership among those involved in education. "I can think of nothing so sorely missing in the

teaching profession," he says,

> as the engagement of teachers in contemplating what schools should be, what children should learn, and what teaching might become. Schools badly need inhabitants who ask *why*—that is, philosophers.... Above all, we need to juxtapose the way things are with school people's visions of how they might become.

Recognizing that a sense of vision is one of the most important traits of effective principals, the U.S. Department of Education (1987) states in its *Principal Selection Guide* that "effective school leaders have broad visions that are clear, active, ambitious, and performance-oriented."

Leadership Forces and the Components of Vision

School leaders have many avenues through which to develop their visions of school success. Thomas Sergiovanni (1984) has described a model of educational leadership comprising five leadership forces, defined as "the means available to administrators, supervisors, and teachers to bring about or preserve changes needed to improve schooling." The five forces—technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural—make up the resources at the disposal of an educational leader, but Sergiovanni points out that the first two, technical and human, receive almost all the attention in training programs for educational administrators, and in most of the literature on educational leadership as well.

Far more important, Sergiovanni believes, are the last two forces, symbolic and cultural, which are inextricably tied to a leader's vision of what constitutes a successful school. Educational leaders often use the symbolic and cultural forces to communicate abstract messages related to their visions. "The symbolic leader assumes the role of 'chief' and by emphasizing selective attention (the modeling of important goals and behaviors) signals to others what is of importance and value," Sergiovanni says. "The cultural leader assumes the role of 'high priest,' seeking to define, strengthen, and articulate those enduring values, beliefs, and cultural strands that give the school its unique identity." The educational leader's vision is the source of many of the messages relayed to others through symbolic and cultural leadership forces. "Vision," Sergiovanni says, "becomes the substance of what is communicated as symbolic aspects of leadership are emphasized."

In another model of effective leadership, A. Lorri Manasse (1986) distinguishes clearly between the leader and the manager and points to the central role that vision plays in separating the two functions:

> Leadership . . . involves determining the direction of an organization (vision), and then leading the organization in that direction (strategy). It is the existence of vision, out of which evolves strategy, that differentiates leadership from management, though some of the actual

activities of the individual encompass both management and leadership.

Manasse identifies four components of vision that educational leaders can use in their efforts to bring about school success:

> ORGANIZATIONAL VISION, based on a systems perspective, assumes that the parts of the whole are dependent on each other, and that their behavior can best be understood in terms of their relationships to their context and their connections. Organizational vision enables leaders to put systems in place that create a capacity for high performance and, at the same time, frees them personally to concentrate on activities with the highest payoff in relationship to their vision.
>
> FUTURE VISION is a comprehensive picture of how an organization will look at some point in the future, including how it will be positioned in its environment and how it will function internally. Future vision incorporates the systems perspective of organizational vision, available information about expected developments, and the personal values and beliefs of the leader. Synthesizing an appropriate direction for an organization requires intuitive as well as rational processes, plus the exercise of moral imagination in the selection of alternative conceptions of goodness. Leaders rely heavily on symbols, metaphors, models, and interpersonal competence in conveying their vision to their organization.
>
> PERSONAL VISION requires both self-awareness and the ability to identify, mobilize, and coordinate complementary skills and resources. Through personal vision, leaders select situations that allow them to position themselves toward their strengths. Leaders see themselves as learners, and create organizations that value innovative learning. Such learning encourages change, renewal, restructuring, and problem reformulation; all of which, in turn, enable people to see change as opportunity rather than threat.
>
> STRATEGIC VISION connects the reality of the present to the possibilities of the future in a personal way that is unique to the organization and its leader. Strategic vision gives members of the organization confidence that there is a rationale behind individual actions or decisions. It guides behavior toward consistency and organizational integrity. Strategic vision requires skill in managing the change process, and facility in the use of symbols and metaphors to link the present to the future vision. It is strategic vision, molded from the intersection of organizational, future, and personal vision, that gives life, energy, meaning, and a sense of purpose to an organization.

Manasse makes clear how important it is for educational leaders to develop, communicate, and carry out a clear, coherent vision of what they want their schools to be like. He says that the separation between thought

and action is never very great:

> Leadership involves the infusion of routine activities with meaning and vision. For leaders, the activities of scheduling and allocating resources, communicating with staff and students, managing the safety and physical environment of a school, evaluating staff, etc., are used, not simply to solve the immediate problems or to accomplish the task at hand, but also to test and communicate a set of values, priorities, and meanings, that, taken together, represent the leader's vision of the organization.

The Visionary Principal

As educational leaders, principals are in an especially good position to formulate their values into a clear vision and bring the vision into being. In the introductory chapter to their study of the principalship, James Lipham, Robb Rankin, and James Hoeh (1985) characterize visionary leadership as the successful implementation of three levels of values: sacred (or core) values, secular values, and operational values. They cite various research that supports their contention that "when the values of individuals within the school are reasonably uniform, the values are translated into meaningful organizational goals, and there is commitment to achieving the goals, then successful schools result." In analyzing the role of principals in establishing school goals, they conclude: "It is imperative . . . that principals act, not merely react, define and state clearly, and are prepared to defend with conviction their own set of educational values, goals, and priorities."

Developing a vision is both an opportunity and a challenge for principals. In his discussion of visionary principals, Marshall Sashkin (1988) identifies several functions that must be carried out if a vision is to become a reality. Drawing on the work of Edgar Schein (1985), Sashkin notes that principals must be able to adapt to a school's environment by building "into their visions the value of control over the organization's destiny and over critical factors in its environment." As examples, he cites technology, political factors, community culture, and economic conditions. Although acknowledging that schools cannot control all these factors, he insists that principals have *some* control over them and should therefore consider them carefully when building their vision. Goal achievement must also be emphasized, a procedure made easier by making sure that "the value of involvement and participation of all faculty and staff in operational decision making" is encouraged throughout the vision-building process. Sashkin states that visionary principals must demonstrate a variety of skills in order to bring about their visions of better education:

Effective school leaders must be able to conceive of a vision, a cultural ideal, for the school. They must be able to generate school-wide support for this vision, by involving others in articulating a philosophy that summarizes the vision and by creating policies and programs that turn the philosophy (and the vision) into action. Finally, effective school leaders carry out their visions through their own specific behavioral practices, as shown by their interpersonal behavior.

Putting Vision into Practice

The difficulty of transferring theory into practice is a challenge that every educational leader must eventually face when trying to bring a vision of school success to life. There are many options and methods that can be used to make progress in instituting a program to achieve one's vision. The material below offers some practical advice on developing, implementing, and maintaining a vision for one's school.

Some Step-by-Step Approaches

Linda Sheive and Marian Schoenheit (1987) interviewed twelve highly effective educational leaders in an attempt to map out some characteristics of visionary leadership. They concluded from the interviews that the leaders' visions fell into two categories, *organizational vision* and *universal vision*. Organizational vision pertains to the results leaders desire to obtain in the school or district where they work, while universal vision transcends the local conditions and involves a general philosophy of education.

Drawing on the characteristics of the school leaders they observed, Sheive and Shoenheit identify five steps that educational leaders can take to actualize their visions. These include:

1. Valuing, or using a set of strongly held personal values to create a desired vision.
2. Reflection, or recognizing that a vision can be realized.
3. Articulation, or effectively communicating to the interested public the details of the vision.
4. Planning, or mapping out strategies by which the vision can be brought to fruition.
5. Action, or taking steps that mobilize people to participate in the process of achieving goals.

Edward Chance and Marilyn Grady (1990) offer a three-step model educational administrators can use to develop or clarify their visions. Step 1 involves a self-assessment of the administrator's personal vision, accom-

plished in part by answering a series of questions related to personal strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Step 2, the actual formulation of the vision statement, can also be carried out by considering a series of questions that help relate the vision statement to internal and external factors affecting the content of the statement. Step 3 provides guidance on implementing, communicating, and sustaining the vision.

Values and Vision

Three articles in a recent issue of the *NASSP Bulletin* focus on various aspects of vision development for educational leaders. Glen Ovard (1990) comments on the importance of adhering to "some long-standing values and guidelines" in establishing a meaningful vision for one's school, including democratic and egalitarian principles, a commitment to quality over quantity, and the establishment of reasonable parameters for school responsibility. He suggests that leaders develop a "vision that comes from meditation, a reliance on values, a knowledge that comes from building quality educational programs for all American youth so that each individual can progress and find self-fulfillment in a free society."

Three Kinds of Statements

Joseph Rogus (1990) clarifies many confusing points about vision statements, mission statements, and goal statements. He points out that "a mission statement is simply a statement of an organization's vision of itself that serves to guide program planning, development, and evaluation." The main problem in developing a statement of a school's vision, according to Rogus, is a matter of semantics:

> The central predicament with the statements, which is one of imprecision, has its genesis in the interpretation of the term "philosophy."
>
> The term is sufficiently broad as to have multiple connotations. Therefore, little agreement exists on what should be included in the statement. The school philosophy is often and understandably a potpourri of belief statements ranging in focus from the purposes of schooling in a democratic society and how learning takes place, to instructional methodology and the role of parents in the educational process. Statements are often general and their implication for day-to-day behavior unclear; they have, in effect, limited value to anyone whose concern extends beyond document contents.

Rogus explains how to circumvent some of these problems and gives examples of effective mission statements and goal statements, which differ from missions statements in that they "can serve as the basis for setting assessable school improvement outcomes." He suggests ways to set up

planning sessions for the statement, communicating the vision, and reinforcing it through activities and review.

An Action Plan

Jerry Herman (1990) recommends ways to realize the vision after it has been transformed into a formal statement. He contends that the successful implementation of a school's vision hinges on a workable action plan, which requires a five-step process:

Step #1: Identify all tasks that must be accomplished.

Step #2: Place a sequential number beside each task that has been identified.

Step #3: Identify the person or persons who are responsible for completing each task.

Step #4: Identify the resources necessary to accomplish the objective.

Step #5: State the measurement that will be used to determine whether or not the objective has been achieved.

Formulating a clear statement that communicates the vision, planning strategies for implementing it, and consistently engaging in activities that demonstrate its importance are all vital components of developing and carrying out a vision for school success. Only by aggressively working to bring about their visions—at all stages and in all arenas of educational activity—can educational leaders expect to achieve the kinds of schools they want to have.

Chapter 2

Culture, Values, and the Successful School

Because the achievement of a vision depends heavily on the effective communication of philosophies, values, and goals, the development of a school's culture is inextricably tied to the idea of visionary leadership. As Terrence Deal and Kent Peterson (1990) note in their study of school cultures:

> The interplay between a principal's values and the existing culture is complex. Principals are often told that cultural leadership is the art of fusing a personal vision with a school that needs direction. This requires *both* a principal who knows what he or she wants *and* a community of faculty, parents, students, and staff who believe they need a new direction to solve existing problems.
>
> If the school culture already gives meaning to the routines of teachers, students, parents, and staff, they see no need for a new direction. But under some conditions, a new vision can be renegotiated throughout the school community, thereby providing a different direction for the school.

Leaders and Heroes, Rituals and Ceremonies

Deal and Peterson define *school culture* as "the character of a school as it reflects deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have formed over the course of its history." They believe that one of a principal's chief responsibilities is to help shape and reinforce a positive school culture, and they use five metaphors to explain the roles an educational leader can play to do that:

1. The principal as *symbol*: affirm values through dress, behavior, attention, routines.
2. The principal as *potter*: shape and be shaped by the school's heroes, rituals, ceremonies, symbols.
3. The principal as *poet*: use language to reinforce values and sustain the school's best image of itself.
4. The principal as *actor*: improvise in the school's inevitable drama.
5. The principal as *healer*: oversee transitions and change in the life of the school.

In concluding their study, Deal and Peterson offer a list of guidelines to aid educational leaders in their efforts to shape positive school cultures:

- Read the existing culture. Understand the inner workings of the school's history, values, and norms and reflect on their match with your own hopes and fears for the school.
- Identify the norms, values, and beliefs you want to reinforce, as well as those you want to change. Develop a deep sense of new elements that are needed.
- If change needs to be dramatic, make an explicit commitment that is known to others.
- Work with *all* the school's stakeholders to clarify the mission and purposes of the school.
- Reinforce the core values and norms of the school by consistently modeling; coaching; attending to detail; observing ceremonies, rituals, and traditions; and telling stories that identify heroes and heroines that all support the school's mission.
- Confront resistance; don't avoid or withdraw from it. Use conflicts to explain and signal the mission and values of the school.
- Highlight the priority of additional values and beliefs you seek to encourage that are not now prominent in the existing culture but that support a vision of the school's mission. Encourage deep structures that support those values and recognize those whose actions illustrate them.
- Recruit teachers and staff who share your view of the mission of the school and whose values and beliefs are consistent with those you are trying to establish.
- Encourage the potent school ceremonies and traditions that celebrate the purposes and goals of the school. Recognize and celebrate successes (both small and large) as often as possible, and involve all members of the school and community in doing so.
- Keep track of what's going on. Regularly reevaluate the extent to which students, teachers, parents, and the community share a vision of the school's mission and the degree to which cultural patterns are

mutually reinforcing and supportive of the school's mission.

In an earlier discussion of school culture, Terrence Deal (1987) notes that extreme changes must often occur before visions are brought into being. In modern-day schools, instituting a new vision often conflicts with the school's old culture. The solution, Deal says, lies not in discarding the old culture, but in revitalizing it: "To heal the wounds and repair ruptured meaning, cultures need to convene transition rituals, to bury and mourn what has been lost, and then to celebrate the new forms that begin to emerge."

A few simple guidelines should be kept in mind: "Old practices and other losses need to be buried and commemorated. Meaningless practices and symbols need to be analyzed and revitalized. Emerging visions, dreams, and hopes need to be articulated and celebrated." The culture is embodied, and can be transformed, Deal says, through such channels as the school's shared values, heroes, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and cultural networks.

Values and School Culture

In his review of studies focusing on organizational culture in effective schools, John Davis (1989) cites several important findings that establish the links between personal values, a strong sense of vision, and positive school cultures. He makes the point that school leaders can use a wide range of symbols to promote their visions:

> An extremely important component of the climate of the effective school is the presence of visible symbols which illustrate and confirm what is considered to be important in the school. Put another way, visible symbols manifest the school's underlying values and assumptions. . . . School newsletters, statements of goals, behavior codes, rituals, symbols, and legends are all part of the culture of the organization and convey messages of what the school really values.

Just as a principal's personal values are tied closely to the formulation of his or her vision, a school's values are inseparable from its culture. As J. Howard Johnston (1987) describes them, "Values are the bedrock of any institution. They articulate the essence of the organization's philosophy about how it goes about achieving success." He points out that a school's values are communicated and disseminated through familiar means: leaders and heroes, the cultural network (the "grapevine"), and rituals and ceremonies.

A principal should be prepared to state, model, and communicate the set of values that make up his or her vision of school success. Such values operate at every level of leadership activity. Being able to articulate those values is an important first step in communicating a broad and coherent

vision of school success.

The Successful School

The concept of the *successful school*, as opposed to the effective or excellent school, is appealing because it is broadly based and accommodates a wide variety of leadership styles and accompanying visions, values, and philosophies about what schooling should accomplish. Thomas Sergiovanni (1987) has written at some length about the model of the successful school. Citing the work or Ernest Boyer (1983), John Goodlad (1983), Sara Lightfoot (1983), Joan Lipsitz (1984), and Diane Ravitch (1984) as contributions to the literature on successful schools, Sergiovanni offers his own definition of the concept:

> A successful school is an image of schooling characterized by strong commitment to multiple goals and within which students demonstrate by tests and other means intellectual values, high academic attainment, responsible citizenship, moral and ethical character, aesthetic expression, and emotional and physical well-being.

Sergiovanni describes the philosophy of a successful school as one in which ideals and traditional values often operate, including the "'egalitarian ideal' *balanced* with the values of hard work, competition, standards, and success." Cultivating the students' intellectual values, developing responsible citizenship, and generating self-confidence are also associated with the successful school.

Sergiovanni also addresses the issue of how a successful school is defined by its culture:

> There exists, in successful schools, a strong culture and clear sense of purpose that defines the general thrust and nature of life for their inhabitants. At the same time, a great deal of freedom is given to teachers and others as to how these essential core values are to be honored and realized. This combination of tight structure—around clear and explicit themes representing the core of the school's culture—and of autonomy—so that people can pursue these themes in ways that make sense to them—may well be a key reason why these schools are so successful.

The apparent contradiction that schools can be both tightly coupled and loosely coupled simultaneously is one of the themes that emerge in the school profiles presented below. The ability of a principal to form and direct a school's vision, while concurrently empowering the school's staff and giving it freedom to bring the vision to fruition in a communal way, may well be a skill that principals must possess if they are to achieve their vision of creating successful schools.

Chapter 3

School Profiles

It is difficult to capture in words the atmosphere, culture, and vitality of successful schools. To some degree, the qualities comprising such schools are intangible. But as one talks and visits with educational leaders who work daily to bring their visions into being, the energy, enthusiasm, commitment, and professionalism that shape the success of these schools can be felt, seen, and heard. The end result of such an experience is a transfer of energy, and it is through this process that school leaders can engage their staffs, students, and communities in participating in the ongoing endeavor of creating better schools.

A Note on School Selection

There are hundreds of successful schools throughout the state of Oregon whose stories deserve to be told, and it is unfortunate that not all of them can be profiled in this section. The schools described below were chosen with two chief purposes in mind. The most important consideration had to do with the fact that the schools were actively engaged in carrying out programs and activities that defined or promoted the school's vision for success or that attempted to make it operational. The second important factor was a desire to profile schools that varied widely in terms of geographical location, student population size, and grade level.

The selection process began by contacting officials at the Oregon State Department of Education and educational administrators in various Oregon school districts. Based on the suggestions of these officials, the author contacted principals and staff members at specific schools, who agreed to be interviewed by telephone or in person and to supply school documents. The profiles were then created from these interviews and documents.

The Onward to Excellence Program and Oregon's HB 2020 Grants

Several schools profiled below have participated in the Onward to Excellence (OTE) program and have used monies from Oregon's House Bill 2020 (HB 2020) grant program to fund projects. These programs are but two of many aids available to school leaders in their efforts to succeed in making their visions a reality. Because some of the schools profiled below have used these programs in their efforts to achieve success, a brief description of them is provided here.

The OTE program was established in 1982 and is carried out under the auspices of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon. As described by Geoffrey Mills (1990), this school improvement program contracts with schools to provide "a systematic, research-based approach to the improvement of student performance" and offers "training, materials, and supportive technical assistance" to that end. Schools participating in the OTE process follow a ten-step plan that includes (1) forming a school leadership team, (2) learning about effective schools research, (3) profiling the current status of student performance, (4) setting goals, (5) collecting information on current staff teaching practices, (6) prescribing methods to improve student performance, (7) developing an implementation plan, (8) implementing new practices, (9) monitoring progress of the program, and (10) reviewing results and renewing or changing existing goals.

According to Carol Black of the Oregon Department of Education, the primary purpose of HB 2020 grants is to "facilitate student academic success and to empower teachers in the process." The grants are the funding mechanism of the School Improvement and Professional Development Program, which grew out of the recommendations made in 1987 by the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Oregon Legislature's Joint Committee on Education. Since the program's inception in the 1987 school year, more than 214 schools throughout the state have received HB 2020 grants to fund their school improvement and professional development projects.

Each year, HB 2020 grant applications are mailed to all 1,250 schools in Oregon. Competition for the grants is keen; for the 1990 school year, more than 113 grant proposals were submitted, with 51 being funded. Funding is awarded at the rate of $1,000 per certified teacher at each site selected. Grants are required to focus on one of three areas: curriculum, student behavior, or instruction.

North Eugene High School

A visitor walking through the entryway to North Eugene High School is immediately aware of the vision that drives the school—North's mission statement is posted near the entrance for everyone to see: "We are a community high school committed to providing excellent instruction in a caring environment. Our goal is the success of our students. The North Eugene community will measure our success as a school by the achievement of our students."

Location: Eugene, Oregon
School District: Eugene 4-J
County: Lane
1990-91 Student Enrollment: 1,020
Grade Levels: 9-12
Principal: Bob Anderson

The emphasis on caring and student success comes through very clearly when Bob Anderson, in his seventh year as principal at North Eugene High, talks about the work that has been done each year to build an atmosphere where caring and conscientiousness translate into student achievement and pride. The efforts of Anderson and his staff have begun to pay off. In December 1990, the Oregon Department of Education announced that North Eugene High was one of five Oregon high schools chosen to compete for national honors in the Secondary School Recognition Program.

North's academic reputation wasn't always so strong. In the early 1980s, it was known more for its sports programs than for its level of student achievement or academic offerings. During the past six years, however, Anderson and his staff have turned that reputation around by implementing a number of programs and policies shaped by his vision of what constitutes a successful school.

Creating a Conducive Climate

The first step in the school's efforts toward improvement involved changing the school's environment. "We really tried to change the environment at the school in terms of the importance of class, the importance of teachers," Anderson says. "We really worked hard to create an environment that was conducive to learning and teaching." As the environment changed, so did some of the statistics that reflect school success. Attendance rates have improved, and there was a marked reduction in serious disciplinary incidents last year. The dropout rate dramatically decreased from 14 percent in 1985-86 to 4 percent in 1989-90. More than 60 percent of North's 1989 graduating class went on to two- or four-year colleges.

Writing for School Success

While North's turnaround can be measured partly in terms of statistics, it is equally evident in the current school improvement programs and other activities that reflect a commitment to the success of the students and the school. As part of the school's involvement in the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Onward to Excellence (OTE) program, North's staff identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and discovered the value of educational research. Anderson describes the process as an adventure in learning:

> We learned to read research, we learned to interpret it, and we learned the importance of it. We learned to work with our staff in terms of trying to determine what was important to them, what was important to the educational process, and what goal we wanted to center on for school improvement.
>
> The goal we selected was the improvement of writing across the curriculum, and since that time, we've been teaching writing in math, writing in health, writing in science and social studies. It was a lofty goal. Most schools starting off in OTE will pick a behavior goal; but we picked a very, very hard goal with the idea that we would have it for four or five years with the intent of institutionalizing it, so that in four or five years the graduates who came out of this school would all feel good about their ability to communicate in writing.

The writing program is in its second year now, but already Anderson sees some positive effects:

> We don't want to say we have the problem licked; we have to look at it over a longer period of time. But we have made some progress, and all staff members are much more aware of the writing process. We're going into the state assessments this year, and all the things we've been doing in terms of the process and the terminology we use are the same as the state uses in its assessments literature, so we feel we have a jump on it.

Success with Numbers

North's mathematics program has also undergone radical changes in the past five years. After evaluating program content, teaching methods, and the evaluation system, the mathematics teaching staff began offering North's students an integrated mathematics program, including the Transition Mathematics course developed by the University of Chicago's School Math Project (UCSMP). North was the first school in its district to offer this course, and the school is now a pilot site for new courses developed by the UCSMP.

Like writing across the curriculum, integrated mathematics requires students to understand math as it relates to other concepts and subjects, such as social studies, science, and industrial arts. A student who learns math through the integrated math program is required to demonstrate the ability to read, think critically, write, solve problems, work cooperatively, use calculators and computers, and apply mathematics in meaningful ways. North's enrollment figures in its mathematics courses demonstrate the program's effectiveness: since 1984, the percentage of North's student body taking math courses has risen from 70 percent to 90 percent.

A Plan for the Next Century

Because Anderson's vision of a successful school also includes preparing students to perform well in the more distant future, a major effort is being made to equip North graduates with the skills needed to function effectively in the twenty-first century. With the help of an HB 2020 grant, North has embarked on a three-year project that will include the collaborative effort among students, staff, and parents in North's educational community. The three specific goals of the program are (1) to increase a sense of individual efficacy by empowering staff, students, and parents in shaping the future of North Eugene High School; (2) to create a climate that actively promotes knowledge and understanding of the skills, behaviors, and values needed for success in the twenty-first century; and (3) to design a plan for implementation of curricula, strategies, policies, and structures that enable students to develop the traits and characteristics that will make them successful participants in the future.

To achieve these goals, Anderson thinks that changes need to be made in the way the educational system prepares students for life after high school:

> We have to provide a different transition for juniors and seniors. Even though 60 percent of our kids start out in two-year or four-year colleges, we know 70 percent of our student body will be in the work place within two years after graduation. We're not doing the job we need to do with juniors and seniors in terms of the high skill development that we think is needed in the work place.

Anderson believes that the preparation of students for the next century involves the development of skills beyond those traditionally taught in high schools.

> We're really looking at the skills needed in the work place in terms of communications skills, interaction skills, problem-solving skills, and the ability for kids to work together in teams," he says. "We'd like to get to the point where, in the sophomore year, we have some effective communication skills in place so we can do some team concept things with juniors and seniors, such as getting them into the community

> more. There are a lot of high-level skills that employers tell us they need, and a lot of our kids aren't ready for that yet.

Organizational Structure and School Success

Just as the learning environment at North has changed over the last few years, a change has taken place in the school's organizational structure as well. Anderson notes that the school's power base at the start of his principalship consisted of department chairs and the principal and vice-principal. Today, North's administrative environment is far more participatory and open, with much more staff involvement in, and understanding of, the school's organizational structure. "We've really tried to model our school after successful businesses in terms of trying to broaden the leadership base," Anderson says. As a result of the OTE process and the HB 20/20 grant, North now has five very active committees involving more than half the staff. The benefits are obvious to Anderson:

> We now have a great number of people and a wide variety of people who really see the organization differently, who see the whole picture rather than just what goes on in class. That's the way to move an organization. We know what businesses have done in terms of producing quality; we feel the same thing is happening in our school as a result of that sort of management.

The analogy of the business world is one of Anderson's favorite ways of explaining his vision of successful school management:

> I think what really needs to take place is to pattern schools after businesses in terms of structuring the organization. The strong ego person who has to have his finger in everything that goes on in a school or organization is, to me, no longer effective if you want your organization to move and keep up. So it's really a sharing of leadership and responsibility that will enable an organization to grow, and I think schools probably work the same way as businesses in that respect.

The concept of shared leadership Anderson has worked toward seems to have succeeded at North Eugene High. The school's success story testifies to the energy and effort of North's entire staff, who work daily to engender the kinds of changes that help build and sustain a positive school culture. Their efforts are perhaps best reflected in the school's appropriate motto: "North, the Right Direction."

Pleasant View Middle School

The virtues of having a small student enrollment are apparent at Pleasant View Middle School, where Gary Sunderland is in his third year as principal. With a student enrollment of only eighty, Pleasant View has some built-in strengths that help Sunderland develop his vision of a successful school. His philosophy for building school success centers on school culture:

Location: Milton-Freewater, Oregon
County: Umatilla
School District: Ferndale School District #10
1990-91 Student Enrollment: 80
Grades: 7-8
Principal: Gary Sunderland

> I feel that oftentimes in education we look at our weaknesses and try to correct those. But I think a better way of going about that is to look at what we do well or what a particular school's strengths are. Our strength is our small size, so there's a good opportunity for the teachers here to become well acquainted with the students, and we want to build on that. We try to build a "family" or "community" feeling in our school. There are a lot of rituals and annual events we have here to nurture that.

The Cooperative Environment

The formal statement that reflects Sunderland's vision for the success of his school stresses that sense of community and cooperative effort:

> Students, teachers, and administrators will work cooperatively to make Pleasant View School a better place to work and learn. Teachers will have high expectations for student achievement and behavior. Students will have the opportunity to make decisions and be responsible for the consequences of those decisions. Teachers and students will work together for the benefit of all because they see themselves as part of a family.

The sense of family at Pleasant View is built in many ways, not all of them strictly educational in the traditional sense of the word. Among the many activities that help create a sense of cohesiveness is an annual holiday event, a "dress-up dinner," where the eighth-grade students serve a meal to the seventh-grade students and other members of the community. Sunderland describes the dinner as a form of etiquette training:

> I've never really seen any thing quite like it before. The students all dress up, and we have special guests—the school secretaries and the school board members and a few people from the community, like a

102-year-old former teacher who has sometimes attended. The eighth graders serve the meal to the seventh graders and the rest of the guests—about thirty of them in all.

Another more traditional activity that still thrives at Pleasant View is the eighth-grade graduation. School dances are also held four times during the school year, and the teachers generally come to the dances as well.

As part of their more formal, structured efforts to instill a sense of community among students, Sunderland and his staff have worked to create an innovative activity called Cooperative Teams, which complements Pleasant View's cooperative learning program. Each year, the school's eighty students are divided into eight groups of ten. Each staff member—six teachers, the school secretary, and Sunderland himself—leads one of the groups, which meet two or three times at the beginning of the school year to do some team-building activities to help the group members get acquainted. "The idea is that we want to give a random group of kids a chance to interact with one another, which helps to avoid cliques," says Sunderland.

During the rest of the school year a community service element is conducted, in which the teams spend three or four afternoons working at different nonprofit community sites. Among the specific sites the students visit is the Horizon Project, a recycling business in Milton-Freewater run by developmentally disabled adults. "The kids get an orientation as to what that project does and then they work right along with the clients, recycling newspapers, cans, and other material," Sunderland explains.

The groups also visit a local nursing home, where they participate in recreational activities and socialize with the residents. They also spend an afternoon working at a day care center for children of the local migrant population. A fourth activity puts the middle school students back in the classroom—at Milton-Freewater's primary school—where group members get a taste of what teaching is like by helping out as teachers' aids.

Other Educational Programs

Pleasant View has benefitted from its participation in the Onward to Excellence (OTE) Program and from two HB 2020 grants. The OTE process helped the school's staff build a foundation from which to work. Pleasant View's first HB 2020 grant application "tied right in with the OTE process," says Sunderland. A year or two previously several staff members had become interested in cooperative learning, Sunderland reports. Then, during the OTE process cooperative learning was identified as something the staff thought would be valuable. Sunderland believes that cooperative learning is an ideal approach to education at his school. "The nice thing about cooperative learning is that it's intercurricular, so everybody can profit from it," he

says. He goes on to explain some of its other benefits:

> We looked at the research connected with cooperative learning and found it to be quite convincing. Cooperative learning has a nice appeal to educators in general, I think, because it gets away from the competitive types of traditional classrooms you have; it allows you to break away from that. Also, the group activities we had done before didn't really have the finesse and structure that was necessary to make them as successful as they might have been, so we thought that using some techniques from cooperative learning would help out there too.

One specific goal established for the HB 2020 grant was tied directly to academic achievement. Even though student scores on the CTBS tests were relatively high at Pleasant View, Sunderland wanted to improve the performance of students who were placing in the lower quartiles. "When we looked at testing data," he says, "We noticed that the same number of kids seemed to be mired in the lower quartiles year after year and there wasn't any movement upward, so we wanted to see if, through the cooperative learning and the other things we were going to do, we could move them up." Therefore, a goal was established to move 10 percent of the students scoring in the three lowest quartiles into a higher quartile on the total battery scores for the 1991 CTBS.

The first HB 2020 grant funded staff training in cooperative learning techniques, and a second grant established three other activities intended to bring about the success Sunderland seeks. The first activity involves the continuation of staff training in advanced cooperative learning techniques.

The second activity, a study skills program, gives Pleasant View's students some management training techniques to teach them how to keep track of their assignments. Sunderland notes that when students come out of elementary schools, they're placed in a situation where they have several different teachers instead of one teacher, and they aren't prepared for the transition. As part of the language arts curriculum, the program requires students to keep a notebook divided into different sections for each curricular area and to keep track of their homework, which homeroom teachers check during the homeroom period. After the first quarter of the year, students who are having difficulty are placed in a study hall for the last period of the day. The study hall is highly structured: the teachers continue to hold students accountable for the study skills curriculum they were taught during the initial quarter. The program has already produced some payoffs. Sunderland reports that, on average, the students placed in this year's structured study hall have had a .3 increase in their GPAs.

A third activity being carried out as part of the second HB 2020 grant tries to capitalize on students' preoccupation with grades. "We realized that one of the things our middle school students are really motivated by is

grades," Sunderland says. "They're real concerned about their grades and their parents are real concerned about their grades. So we felt that if we kept them abreast of where they were at during the quarter, it would act as a motivator."

To capitalize on this idea, the school purchased some electronic gradebooks and had the school's computer education teacher put together training sessions to teach the staff how to use and implement the electronic gradebook system in their classrooms. As a result, students are now provided with biweekly updates of their grades in each class. All but one of Pleasant View's teachers are now using the electronic gradebook, and all of them are providing the biweekly updates. Sunderland reports that the idea has filtered down to the local elementary school, where about half of the fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade teachers are also now using the electronic gradebook system.

Cooperation—The Key to Success

Sunderland's vision of a successful school is one that emphasizes student self-direction, responsibility, and independence in a context of cooperation. He believes that the atmosphere at a successful school is characterized by cooperation and self-discipline. He doesn't rely on heavy-handed disciplinary actions or threats. "That's what I tell kids who I see now and then," he says. "I tell them that we're just trying to cooperate and work together with each other. And the kids really respond to that."

Orchard Hill Elementary School

Tim Mobley, principal at Orchard Hill Elementary School, describes his vision of a successful school as a place that provides an "optimum learning environment, a place where children are and feel safe, a place where instruction is challenging and worthwhile, a place where all students can be successful at some level, a place where students build self-concept, responsibility, and integrity." His efforts to create such a school began four years ago when he began his principalship at Orchard Hill. Since then, Orchard Hill has developed several programs centered on staff collegiality, cooperative learning, and parental support to build a solid base for school success.

Location: Medford, Oregon
School District: Phoenix-Talent #4
County: Jackson
1990-91 Student Enrollment: 320
Grade Levels: K-5
Principal: Tim Mobley

The Rebuilding Process

One of Mobley's first priorities as principal was to unify the staff and build on its strengths. "When I came here," he explains, "the principal I replaced had been released by the school board. The staff was very professional but fairly well disempowered. My main goal was to empower the staff and have them work on their strengths, because they were a very highly trained and dedicated group of professionals."

A teacher and parent survey identified several areas that seemed promising as starting points for launching Orchard Hill's efforts to build a more successful school. A number of teachers and parents suggested that more energy be invested in getting students to work together. Mobley describes how communicating, reading, networking, and planning led to some concrete action:

> There seemed to be a lot of disenchantment among the students. We did some research in professional journals and talked to some people around the state, and cooperative learning was the thing that came to mind. Several of us had just finished reading William Glasser's *Quality Schools* and *Control Theory in the Classroom*, in which he recommends that students learn to work in cooperative groups. We found a Johnson and Johnson training session scheduled for the following summer in Seattle, so we signed up for that.

These plans fit in perfectly with another of Mobley's goals—to strengthen staff collegiality. Mobley felt that improvement in this area would have a profound impact on students: "Having just come off a rocky time from the previous administration, we thought we needed to pull the staff back together, so collegiality became an important goal. Staff modeling has a lot to do with what the students perceive, with what they pick up nonverbally." Yet another way to improve student performance, Mobley believed, would be to increase parental support and involvement in the school, so that, too, became a goal for Orchard Hill's first HB 20/20 grant.

With the plan for regrouping and building on the school's strengths well under way, Orchard Hill applied for the HB 2020 grant, which was awarded in 1988. That summer all but two of Orchard Hill's teaching staff went to Seattle and stayed together for a week, attending the Johnson and Johnson workshop. "It really was a boost for us," Mobley says. "Being together was just the shot we needed for our collegiality, and the common language we learned through the cooperative learning training was extremely helpful."

Buoyed by the success of their efforts, the school applied for and received a second HB 2020 grant, which helped continue the development of the cooperative learning and parental support programs. The second grant also established a self-esteem goal for the teaching staff and students.

The Rewards of Success

Once the cooperative learning, self-esteem, and parental support programs were in place, the positive results were quick in coming. Mobley describes some of the changes that took place:

> Our cooperative learning training has paid huge dividends in a number of ways. Not only do the students work together in the classroom, but they also do better outside the classroom. Our students have relatively few referrals. We have a small core of repeat offenders, our at-risk pool, if you will, that we are currently working on. Students are taking responsibility for solving their own problems, since problem-solving and conflict resolution skills are an integral part of our cooperative learning program.

Mobley reports that in the area of self-esteem, results from pretests and posttests of Orchard Hill's fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students with the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Inventory last year showed a scale gain of 1.45. Since, as Mobley notes, Purkey's research indicates that students' self-esteem goes down throughout their educational careers, Orchard Hill's staff "feel good about the initial results of the program."

Commenting on the progress made in the area of parental support, Mobley says:

> Our previous PTO became inactive for a variety of reasons. However, through the leadership and hard work of several staff members and parents, a PTA was started last year, and this year we have the highest monthly meeting attendance ever. The parents are motivated and enthusiastic about our programs and have even started some of their own, such as the Star Reading program.

Orchard Hill has gained additional benefits from its programs that aren't necessarily measurable in the classroom. Two Orchard Hill teachers have become certified trainers in cooperative learning techniques, while Mobley and another teacher have been certified as trainers for the Personality Fitness Training for Youth program. All these staff members are actively putting their new skills to work by staging training sessions and workshops in their areas of expertise. Statewide recognition of Orchard Hill's success has also come in the form of invitations from state conferences and school districts to make presentations about its programs.

Mobley thinks that to build a successful school, he must act as a facilitator:

> My belief is that the teachers are the professionals. My job is to empower them and help them build on their strengths, and in doing so, the same thing is going to happen with students. I want to provide Orchard Hill's staff with the right training and information, and to empower them to do what they believe is appropriate. I want to assist

them in any way I can.

Judging from Orchard Hill's record of improvement, he has succeeded quite well indeed.

Oaklea Middle School

Sara Jane Bates, who has been principal at Oaklea Middle School for eight years, believes that a well-prepared staff is one of the most important elements in achieving school success. "My vision of school success has to do, first, with staff development," she says.

Location: Junction City, Oregon
School District: Junction City #69
County: Lane
1990-91 Student Enrollment: 640
Grade Levels: 5-8
Principal: Sara Jane Bates

> The word "empowering" is an overused word now, but instilling that attitude in the staff so they are able to translate that into their teaching, into their curriculum, and into their students, is very important. I think that creating a staff focus or a staff vision is about the most important thing I do, so we spend quite a bit of time working on components of staff development.

Bates's idea of staff development goes beyond training in curriculum and instructional strategies. "We carry out staff development as people development," she explains.

Developing Programs for Success

The establishment of several programs at Oaklea during the last few years is proof of Bates's dedication to creating a more successful school. In 1987, as a result of its participation in the Onward to Excellence (OTE) program, the staff at Oaklea Middle School made a commitment to "increasing the percentage of students who feel that motivation and academic success are important." Several activities were planned to bring about this result, with the focus being on staff development programs that prepared teachers to encourage attitudinal changes leading to improved academic performance.

Out of the OTE process, Oaklea's staff planned a number of different activities to attain goals in the affective domain, where their profile data indicated they had a need. Wallace Cassel, a teacher who coordinates many of Oaklea's school improvement activities, describes how Oaklea settled on its goals and how it set out to achieve them:

> In 1988, when HB 2020 grants became available, we took our goals for the grant directly from the OTE process. We felt like the OTE experience did the profiling for us and established our goals, and the grant program was a way of providing some funds to attain those goals. Some of the specific means by which we thought we could attain changes in student attitude included a more effective homeroom program, including a homeroom curriculum. And the second goal of our grant was to develop a program for at-risk students. The homeroom program curriculum was developed and completed in our first year of the grant. We're in our third year with the at-risk program, and most of its components have been implemented.

Model Homeroom and At-Risk Programs

The homeroom program was a major step in improving the affective components of education at Oaklea. It was designed to help students develop self-confidence, positive decision-making skills, and leadership skills. In order to standardize the offerings in the homeroom program, a series of training sessions for five Homeroom Cadre members was planned. These cadre members subsequently helped to train the rest of Oaklea's teaching staff in appropriate curricular content and teaching strategies in homeroom classes, and they also developed a teacher's guide book. As a result, a set of weekly activities covering such topics as community building, friendship, and self-esteem was developed. Thanks to the rejuvenated homeroom program, Oaklea's students now receive a full complement of expert affective education instruction and have daily contact with homeroom teachers who can provide them with skilled academic and behavioral counseling.

As the second component in Oaklea's first HB 2020 grant, the at-risk program was developed in three phases. During the first year, a staff intervention team was trained for working with at-risk students. The team designed an at-risk program, coordinated the school's intervention efforts, and trained the rest of Oaklea's faculty in the methods and skills needed to improve the performance of students identified as being at risk. During the second year, several other elements of the plan were developed. For example, a year-long "success" class taught by two at-risk intervention team members is now offered, which gives sixth- and seventh-grade at-risk students the chance to learn a complete range of study skills, social skills, interpersonal skills, and life skills.

Other components carried out during the second year included pilot programs to (1) develop teachers' skills in the areas of cooperative learning, peer coaching, and learning styles; (2) empower and train parents of at-risk students; and (3) establish an adult-student mentor program, intended to provide at-risk students with one-to-one attention by caring adults from the

school staff.

The at-risk program is now in its third year, and Oaklea's staff has implemented the pilot components and planned some additional ones as well, such as a student assistant, or peer tutoring, module, and a day-activities program, which enhances self-esteem through community service projects and recreational opportunities.

Measuring the Results

Oaklea's staff has invested much effort in creating instruments that measure the outcomes of these attempts to change student attitudes and behaviors. Cassel reports that Oaklea has developed two surveys—a student attitude survey, which is administered to the entire student body each year, and a substance abuse survey. He describes how the school uses the surveys to track changes in student attitudes and behaviors:

> With the attitude survey, we've picked groupings of questions that focus on certain aspects of the affective area, and we graph the data and look at them thoroughly each year. Since we feel that students' views about substance abuse are also an important indicator of their overall attitudes, we use the substance abuse survey as well. We've used these two surveys since the beginning of the OTE process, and they are our two major instruments for looking at student attitudes. With student behavior, we look at referral data, which we have now put on computer base so we can use them much more effectively. And we look at attendance because that's also an indicator as well. So we look at several different things to try to measure what's actually happening.

Planning for the Future

Looking toward the future, Bates and Cassel are already planning for some changes they think will continue to improve the quality of education offered at Oaklea. Their attention is currently focused on restructuring. "First we're trying to make people aware that restructuring is not just redoing schedules, reshaping where things are located, that sort of thing," explains Cassel. "It has to do with basic ways that we go about teaching kids, things that we teach kids, how we put the curriculum together."

Bates echoes Cassel's point about looking for ways to make changes that are in the best interests of the students. "In looking at restructuring, we will be looking at the way we are delivering our services," she says.

> That could involve governance issues, it could involve the organization and structure of the institution, and it could involve curriculum issues, which includes teaching strategies. We feel that we have most of the governance issues moving in a direction we're satisfied with,

and our organization and structure is likewise strong in terms of communities and schools within a school and teaming and things like that.

One area we do want to concentrate on is curriculum and the delivery of the content, so we're doing some skill-building in the areas of instructional strategies and we're looking to become more educated in order to make some decisions about curriculum itself. The model that we have used in the past for staff development and program improvement is to have a cadre of faculty become as knowledgeable as possible, and that's what we're doing right now with restructuring. We'll be using things like Anne Lewis's *Restructuring of American Schools*, James Beane's *From Rhetoric to Reality: Curriculum Reorganization*, and other research.

The Key to Future Success

The emphasis on a clear plan of action involving both teachers and students is one of the earmarks of Bates's philosophy about how to achieve success at her school. "I believe the staff must be taken care of in a way that promotes their own personal development," she concludes. "I think Oaklea's staff has such a strong belief system and vision for success that they now have a very high level of professionalism and a pretty clear sense of where they're headed." Given the recent history of the energy and effort Oaklea's faculty has invested in developing their skills and improving the quality of education they deliver, the future for Oaklea's students will continue to be bright indeed.

Pilot Butte Junior High School

Four times every year, students at Pilot Butte Junior High School, the largest junior high school in Oregon, receive "giant step" seals that document their individual progress, accomplishments, and contributions to the school. A student can receive any of ninety-four different seals—the equivalent of scholastic merit badges—which are then placed in each student's individual plaque affixed to his or her locker. "Seals Presentation Day" is a big event at Pilot Butte, with parent volunteers serving as organizers and facilitators for the award program.

Location: Bend, Oregon
School District: Bend/LaPine #1
County: Deschutes
1990-91 Student Enrollment: 1,058
Grade Levels: 6-8
Principal: Larry Reeser

This ongoing reward system, a long-term investment in building each student's sense of self-esteem, is part of the Giant Steps Seals Program, one of several programs the staff at Pilot Butte has developed to bring about its overall goal of "positive student achievement and behavior within an environment of school pride and spirit."

These programs served to demonstrate the staff's commitment to developing its vision for school success. Larry Reeser, Pilot Butte's principal, believes that "every child is unique, and has the potential to be—and wants to be—successful." Reeser's first priority in building school success is to ensure that there "will always be student achievement and growth." Reeser's goals extend beyond the boundaries of his school; he believes that "all students will be winners from the overall effectiveness of the school, and that the programs, instruction, and strategies developed at Pilot Butte over the next few years will assist other schools in their efforts toward excellence."

Programs for Student Success

Many programs and strategies developed by Pilot Butte's staff during the last three years have already had an impact. Complementing the Giant Steps Seals Program is the Student-of-the-Month Program, another student recognition effort geared toward building motivation and self-esteem. Each month, all teachers at Pilot Butte recognize one student for outstanding performance during the month. The recognition is based on academic achievement and/or improvement, behavioral improvement, positive attitude, or any other quality that deserves special attention. The students selected have their pictures taken by the photojournalism class, and the photos are displayed above the nominating teacher's door. Photos of previous "Students of the Month"' are displayed in the "Hall of Fame" in the cafeteria. Recognized students receive a certificate and seal; their parents get a "Student of the Month" bumper sticker and a letter of commendation.

Capitalizing on its close proximity to the high-quality skiing terrain in the Bend area, Pilot Butte has also developed another reward program called S.K.I. (Success, Knowledge, and Improvement). Six times during the ski season, free ski trips to nearby Mt. Bachelor are awarded to several lucky Pilot Butte students who have been nominated for their achievement in academics, positive behavior, community service, and/or good samaritan actions. Each winning student can invite a friend, and all ski tickets and equipment are donated by local businesses. The home economics staff prepares a lunch. Students also receive certificates and a seal, while their parents receive a letter commending their son or daughter for outstanding performance.

Building Teacher Success

These programs all reflect the staff's belief that all students want to be successful and that individual progress should be encouraged and rewarded. But Reeser and the teachers at Pilot Butte also recognize the role that staff development plays in maintaining a vital educational program. Among the processes used to ensure that teachers receive quality staff development opportunities is a staff development team of seven staff members who actively develop and implement staff development workshops and a mentor program to assist new staff members. Peer coaching teams and cooperative learning teams are also active at Pilot Butte. As evidence of its success in developing first-rate teachers, the school can point to the fact that two of its teachers were recently honored in the Oregon Teacher of the Year Program: Linda Hanson as 1990 Oregon Science Teacher of the Year and Dan Jones as 1990 Oregon Technology Teacher of the Year.

An active program of recognizing teaching effectiveness and community support also exists. Every two weeks, seven Pilot Butte staff members and patrons are recognized for their contributions. Once each month the Pilot Butte student body honors two staff members from those nominated during the month.

A concerted effort has been made in the past few years to build a team approach at Pilot Butte. The entire staff now participates in the decision-making process at the school through committees and teams that develop, plan, and implement programs and policies.

Pilot Butte takes care of its at-risk students as well as its talented and gifted students through a wide range of academic offerings. The SAIL Program for high-risk students gives priority to developing organizational, social, and language-processing skills that facilitate academic success. For exceptional students, enriched programs are offered, including an after-school class called Mathcounts, which provides eighth-grade students with instruction in advanced math topics and computer programming.

The atmosphere that promotes success at Pilot Butte is perhaps best reflected in its mission statement and goals. The mission statement emphasizes the staff's desire to see its students excel:

> We, the staff of Pilot Butte Junior High School, believe that each student is unique and has the potential to become a creative, responsible, productive, and caring person. It is our purpose, therefore, to provide a school environment that will contribute to the academic, social, and personal growth of students by considering those needs unique to the middle school student. Maintaining an effective school is the shared responsibility of the student body, staff, parents, and community.

It is clear from the number of activities going on at Pilot Butte that the school makes every effort to achieve its formal goals, which are

> To continue to effectively address the unique needs of middle school students by maintaining high expectations for student achievement and behavior; promoting student motivation and school pride through the development of positive self-esteem; promoting staff development, professionalism, and collegiality; and promoting parent and community involvement.

Looking Ahead

A full agenda of activities to prepare Pilot Butte's students for the future is underway. The school plans to strengthen its programs in alcohol and drug abuse prevention, to create an Alternative Education Program for its at-risk students, and to continue to develop educational opportunities in areas such as computer instruction and vocational training.

The watchword at Pilot Butte is improvement within a framework of cooperation, and the school's staff has planned for the future by making a strong commitment to a set of values that reflect the desire to become increasingly successful:

> Pilot Butte must improve in every aspect of its total, overall program. Direction, planning, and organization is a must. Improved instruction and teacher effectiveness is a must. Creativity and initiative is a must. Cooperation, collegiality, and teamwork within the school and community is a must. Student success and growth is a must!

Chapter 4

Recommendations and Conclusions

Developing a vision for school success begins when a principal or school leader examines his or her own vision—the values, beliefs, hopes, and dreams he or she maintains—and resolves to bring them into being within the context of a particular school. In this sense, every vision of school success is unique. But once the decision has been made to act on one's personal vision, a full reservoir of ideas is available to make the process possible. Many of these ideas have been delineated above in the school profiles and in the descriptions of literature on the role of vision in educational leadership.

Learning from Experience

When asked how they would respond to a colleague seeking advice on developing a vision for school success, the principals interviewed for this Bulletin naturally gave answers that reflected their own personal leadership styles. However, three common themes emerged. First, several principals emphasized the importance of *reflection* and *self-analysis*, of carefully considering and clearly formulating one's own personal beliefs and attitudes—that is, one's vision—about education, before undertaking the often difficult challenge of bringing that vision about. If one is to communicate the vision effectively, it is obvious that it must be clear, understandable, forceful, and persuasive.

Second, all the principals commented on—and demonstrated in their own vision-building agendas—the need for *generating staff support and cooperation* for the vision itself and for any vision-building activities. One principal recommended spending a considerable amount of time with individual staff members, explaining the vision and listening to individual re-

sponses, before meeting with the faculty as a whole. Another suggested listening to staff members' visions of what they wanted their students to be like in five years in order to ensure that some consensus exists about the direction the school should take.

A third principal commented on the importance of involving the community in vision-building, since without support from that constituency, little real progress can be made. Still another principal, who discerns in any change process a hierarchy of initiators, first followers, and stragglers, believed that strong leaders must have "the courage to move with a critical mass" once it is achieved, and suggested that "the caboose will either follow or come loose." This principal also believed that an educational leader who wants to succeed in achieving a vision must be a talented motivator and effective human resource manager.

A third common theme emerging from the interviews involved *educational research*. All the principals demonstrated a knowledge of current research in areas related to their visions, and they employed practices that reflected this knowledge. Although their knowledge often centered on different topics, including cooperative learning, restructuring, effective schools research, and school management, the principals made it clear that they were *active* learners, just as they expected their staffs and students to be. They were quick to point out the helpfulness of research, and they demonstrated this belief by using it in their own professional lives.

Some Other Important Concepts

The material surveyed in this Bulletin yields several other general recommendations for school leaders who want to establish or reevaluate their visions for school success:

1. **Develop a vision based on high expectations and the ideals associated with successful schools.** Place your vision in the context of the school for which it is intended.

2. **Establish a clear relationship between your vision and the school's missions and goals.** It is very important, as one principal remarked, that mission statements be written to reflect the vision, and that school activities be designed with the school's vision in mind.

3. **Communicate and discuss your vision in as many arenas as possible—in the classroom, school, and community.** Make it become a part of the discourse of education at your school. Share your ideas with your professional colleagues.

4. **Involve all the school's stakeholders in the process of developing and implementing a vision for school success.** It is much easier, and

much less lonely, to work with a community of people engaged in a laudable goal. Little can be accomplished alone, much together.

5. **Strive for consistency in the ways you communicate your vision.** Take a stand and stick to it. Work hard to shape a consensus among all stakeholders in your educational community. Be prepared for hurdles and roadblocks. Make contingency plans. Show courage.

6. **Building a positive school culture is an important component of any successful vision-building program**. The school profiles and literature give ample evidence of the effectiveness of activities that build self-esteem, community respect, cooperation, and school pride. These activities are often cost-free, involving forums where such activities as ceremonies, rituals, myths, and school history can be enacted and communicated.

One final point should be made. There is no one style of educational leadership that best allows a principal to develop and implement a vision for school success. That fact was made clear over and over again in talking with the principals whose schools were profiled; each had an approach shaped by his or her own personality and the conditions existing at the particular school. As Thomas Sergiovanni (1987) reminds us:

> In successful schools principals are educational leaders with strong views about schooling, teaching, and learning. They practice "purposing," defined as actions that elicit from others clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding the schools' basic purposes and values. Their leadership styles range from the heroic to the ordinary. Heroic leaders take charge personally. Ordinary leaders tend to emphasize building team leadership. Both types work within the framework of tight alignment on values and loose alignment on implementation. Style itself is less important than what the principal stands for, believes in, and communicates to others.

A Vision for School Success in the Twenty-First Century

As the next century approaches, bringing with it new demands for educational change and, in turn, new demands on educational leaders, it is an ideal time for school leaders to reevaluate their visions and dreams of what should take place in our schools. Several of the principals interviewed made it clear that they have already begun to consider the question of what the world will demand of them and their students ten years from now. They recognize that education is an active endeavor, never a static or passive one, and they offer the best evidence that forming a vision of what students need in the distant future is one of the most important responsibilities of school leaders today.

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Oregon School
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